

Readings Booklet

June 1996



English 33

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

LB
3054
C22
A3
gr.12
E54
G74B
1996:
June:
rdgs.
c.2
CURRHIST

Alberta
EDUCATION



EX LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTÆNSIS

Copyright 1996, the Crown in Right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Education, Alberta Education, Student Evaluation Branch, 11160 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2. All rights reserved. Additional copies may be purchased from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre.

Special permission is granted to **Alberta educators only** to reproduce, for educational purposes and on a non-profit basis, parts of this examination that do **not** contain excerpted material **only after the administration of this examination**.

Excerpted material in this examination **shall not** be reproduced without the written permission of the original publisher (see credits page, where applicable).

June 1996
English 33 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: 2 hours. You may take an additional 1/2 hour to complete the examination.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

I. Questions 1 to 10 from your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a short story.

from THE ECLIPSE

This story is set in a boarding school. The students and their teacher, Mr. Ripley, have taken a field trip out of town to see a total eclipse of the sun.

Mr. Ripley handed out the pieces of blackened glass and strips of exposed negative. We had been warned not to look at the sun without one of these protections, and now, holding up my sooty glass, I took my first look.

5 The sun was in crescent, an imitation of the moon, a humble step down from power. It looked no different from the several partial eclipses I had seen in my life, and I was disappointed.

The younger children played in the snow and screamed. Nydia giggled with Tom Frank, one of our classmates, and Marcia, in low tones, was giving advice to Hank McCurdy, another classmate. She loved to give advice, especially to
10 boys. Terry paced to and fro, lost in her own thoughts.

The light was weakening and weakening and the cold growing: a deathly cold. We began to stamp and beat our hands together, and when a thermos of hot cocoa was produced there were cheers.

“Why couldn’t it be coffee!” murmured sophisticated Marcia.
15 Whenever I looked at the sun through the black glass it had grown narrowed; and finally it was little more than a sickle of reddish light. Then less. Less . . . Still less.

And now the miracle took place. I dropped my glass. Across the snow, suddenly, ran streamers of shadow and iridescent light, wavering bands turning
20 and turning in an unimaginable wheel of rays. What was happening? There was a startling impression of swiftness, as if something—someone?—hastened forward to a climax. The sky darkened abruptly. A great still coldness dropped onto the world and all around its edge there was a band of orange light, like the instant before sunrise on all the horizons of the earth at once.

25 “Look up! Look, look, look,” whispered Terry.

In the deep sky where there had been a sun, we saw a ring of white silver; a smoking ring, and all the smokes were silver, too; gauzy, fuming, curling, unbelievable. And who had ever seen the sky this color! Not in earliest morning
30 nor at twilight, never before had we seen or dreamed this strange immortal blue in which a few large stars now sparkled as though for the first time of all.

At some point I glanced for an instant at those nearest me. I had never seen before, nor have I since, the expression of total awe on the faces of a crowd; all

Continued

turned upward, arrested, self-forgotten, like the faces of revelation in old religious paintings.

35 There were tears on Terry's cheeks, I remember, and Carla Cudlipp, a fat pragmatism girl, was on her knees in the snow in an attitude of prayer. Even Miss Lagrange, a battle axe if ever one lived, was trembling all over like a frightened child.

40 But I watched them for no longer than a second; it was more important to watch, to try to memorize, that marvelous smoking circle of light, where all too soon the blinding edge of crescent appeared and one could look no longer, and had no wish to look.

We were quiet going down the hill again; even the younger children were quiet: "Gosh," said Marcia, and sighed. It seemed as suitable a comment as any.

45 All of us were frozen with cold, subdued, spotted with soot. The world once more was muted in the queer dreamlight. Nothing seemed familiar.

 "But suppose you'd never seen the sun set in your life," said Nydia suddenly. "Suppose you'd never seen a rainbow. It would be the same thing; you'd be just as—as dumbfounded. You know, you'd get this same terrific kick
50 out of it. I mean it's not a phenomenon or God or anything, it's just that the moon gets in front of the sun once in a while; just a natural thing. It's only that you hardly ever get to *see* it."

 "Yes, but gosh, when you do see it, it makes everything else seem more wonderful," I said. "It's as though they let you in on the secret for a minute or
55 two; I mean it's sort of as though they let you remember how it all works and how *wonderful* it is!"

 But it was beyond my powers to express what it meant. I fell silent, trying to recapture in memory the exact impression, the exact sensation, of that instant when the universe had seemed to open like a door before me, or my own eyes to
60 open and behold for the first time.

We felt that we had been away for months. Everything in our room, when we returned, looked childish, trivial, and cheap.

Marcia hurled her coat on the bed, smoothed her sweater down on her hips, sighed.

65 "I know! Let's have a snack before lunch," she said, brightening. Then she went to the cabinet and brought out the box of crackers and the marshmallow whip, settling comfortably on her bed with them, spreading the crackers with a lavish hand. She held one out to me. I had not realized I was so hungry, and went on eating when the others had stopped, although I knew it would be a
70 matter of minutes until the lunch bell rang.

Nydia went to the mirror and refreshed herself at her own reflection for a while, then she turned to the Victrola, cranked it up, and put on a record called

Continued

75 “Brown Eyes Why Are You Blue?” Recklessly, she reached in the cabinet and brought out a cigarette, lighted it, and began dancing slowly with her eyes closed, as if asleep. She had learned, by diligent application, to hold the smoke in her mouth for a long time and then let it out gradually through her nostrils, and she did this now. She looked very worldly. I sat watching her as I crunched steadily through the box of soda crackers.

80 Terry, oblivious of all, was writing yet another somber letter to her Jack—(she had written three the day before)—and Marcia was polishing her nails with a buffer; the pearl ring she had been given on her sixteenth birthday gleamed and winked rhythmically.

85 There was a noise in the hall outside our room and Nydia’s blue eyes flew open. She stubbed out the cigarette on the sole of her shoe, tossed it into the waste basket, and stood for a moment listening, holding her breath and fanning away the smoke. Then she laughed.

“Come on, Lib,” she said to me, holding out her hands. “Let’s dance, you need the practice, you’re still terrible. I’ll lead.”

90 Humbly and doggedly I did my best to follow. Terry looked up and smiled at us vaguely from her remote place. Marcia watched my feet. “Try not to trudge,” she said.

Little by little we were curing ourselves of wonder, and the universe shrank back to its small customary size.

Elizabeth Enright (1909–1968)
American author-illustrator

II. Questions 11 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

HUNTING WITH MY FATHER

- When I was a boy we always did it this way:
I wake to the smell of coffee
and you are at the fire,
its flames mirrored in your glasses.
- 5 Buck, the Colonel's dog, sleeps on beneath the bunk house,
his old legs quivering with problems of their own.
The raw south Texas dawn is about to break
and at the camp we are quiet as we eat.
Three deer hang gutted from a live oak,
- 10 their long shapes still graceful.
- Father and I will hunt this desert
as if our lives depend on it,
but the kill is not what draws us here.
Every morning we walk the long mesa,¹
- 15 slowly working the ravines overgrown with mesquite.²
When we come to a water hole we will post³ for hours
watching the grey end of the afternoon.
Standing there, deep in the silence of animals,
my father is showing me the greater world
- 20 that I might find my resemblance in it.

Tom Absher
Contemporary American poet

¹mesa—a flat-topped elevation with one or more clifflike sides

²mesquite—small shrubs

³post—take up position

III. Questions 19 to 28 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

from THE APOLLO¹ OF BELLAC

CHARACTERS:

AGNES

CLERK

THERESE

MAN FROM BELLAC

SCENE: *The reception room of The International Bureau of Inventions. This is a large, well-appointed room on the second floor of a magnificent office building in Paris. There is an elaborate crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The morning sun plays upon it. Four doors open off the room. Three of them are marked Private. These lead into the office of the PRESIDENT, and the FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT, and the Director's Conference Room. Behind a desk sits the RECEPTION CLERK. The desk has a telephone and a row of signal lights. It has also a blotter on which the CLERK is writing something in an appointment book. The CLERK is well on in years and his face makes one think of a caricature by Daumier.*²

TIME: *Autumn in Paris. The present or shortly before.*

The CLERK is writing with a meticulous³ air. The outer door opens. AGNES comes in timidly and stands in front of the desk. The CLERK does not look up.

AGNES: Er—

CLERK: Yes?

5 AGNES: Is this the International Bureau of Inventions, Incorporated?

CLERK: Yes.

AGNES: Could I please see the Chairman of the Board?

CLERK (*Looks up*): The Chairman of the Board? No one sees the Chairman of the Board.

10 AGNES: Oh. (*The outer door opens again. THERESE sweeps into the room. She is blonde, shapely, thirty-five, dressed in expensive mink. CLERK rises respectfully.*)

Continued

¹Apollo—sun-god of classical Greek mythology, patron of music and poetry

²Daumier (1808–79)—French painter and caricaturist who won contemporary fame for satirical cartoons about government corruption

³meticulous—very careful, fussy

- CLERK: Good morning, Madame.
 THERESE: Is the President in?
- 15 CLERK: Yes, Madame. Of course. (THERESE walks haughtily to the President's door. CLERK opens it for her and closes it behind her. He goes back to his desk where AGNES is waiting.)
- AGNES: Could I see the President?
 CLERK: No one sees the President.
- 20 AGNES: But I have—
 CLERK: What type of invention? Major? Intermediate? Minor?
 AGNES: I beg pardon?
 CLERK: Assistant Secretary to the Third Vice-President. Come back Tuesday. Name?
- 25 AGNES: My name?
 CLERK: You have a name, I presume? (THE MAN FROM BELLAC appears suddenly from outer door. He is non-descript, mercurial,⁴ shabby.)
 MAN: Yes. The young lady has a name. But what permits you to conclude that the young lady's invention is as minor as all that?
- 30 CLERK: Who are you?
 MAN: What chiefly distinguishes the inventor is modesty. You should know that by now. Pride is the invention of non-inventors. (A STREET SINGER, accompanied by violin and accordion, begins "La Seine"⁵ outside the windows. CLERK crosses to close them.)
- 35 AGNES (To the MAN): Thanks very much, but—
 MAN: To the characteristic modesty of the inventor, the young lady adds the charming modesty of her sex—(He smiles at AGNES). But—(CLERK closes one of the windows) how can you be sure, you, that she has not brought us at last the invention which is destined to transform the modern world?
- 40 CLERK (Closes the other window): For world-transformations it's the Second Vice President. Mondays ten to twelve.
 MAN: Today is Tuesday.
 CLERK: Now how can I help that?
 MAN: So! While all humanity awaits with anguish the discovery which will at
- 45 last utilize the moon's gravitation for the removal of corns,⁶ and when we have every reason to believe that in all likelihood Mademoiselle—
 Mademoiselle?
- AGNES: Agnes.
 MAN: Mademoiselle Agnes has this discovery in her handbag—You tell her to
- 50 come back Monday.

Continued

⁴mercurial—quick-witted, spirited

⁵"La Seine"—a song about the river that runs through Paris

⁶corns—hardened parts of the skin, especially on toes

CLERK (*Nervously*): There is going to be a Directors' meeting in just a few minutes. The Chairman of the Board is coming. I must beg you to be quiet.

MAN: I will not be quiet. I am quiet Mondays.

55 **CLERK**: Now, please. I don't want any trouble.

MAN: And the Universal Vegetable? Five continents are languishing in the hope of the Universal Vegetable which will once and for all put an end to the ridiculous specialization of the turnip, the leek and the string-bean, which will be at one and the same time bread, meat, wine and coffee, and
60 yield with equal facility cotton, potassium, ivory and wool. The Universal Vegetable which Paracelsus could not, and Burbank dared not, imagine! Yes, my friend. And while in this handbag, which with understandable concern she clutches to her charming bosom, the seeds of the Universal Vegetable await only the signal of your President to burst upon an
65 expectant world, you say—come back Monday.

AGNES: Really, sir—

CLERK: If you wish an appointment for Monday, Mademoiselle—

MAN: She does not wish an appointment for Monday.

CLERK (*Shrugs*): Then she can go jump in the lake.

70 **MAN**: What did you say?

CLERK: I said: She can go jump in the lake. Is that clear?

MAN: That's clear. Perfectly clear. As clear as it was to Columbus when—
(*The BUZZER sounds on the CLERK's desk. A LIGHT flashes on.*)

CLERK: Excuse me. (*He crosses to the VICE PRESIDENT'S door, knocks and enters. MAN smiles. AGNES smiles back wanly.*)
75

AGNES: But I'm not the inventor of the Universal Vegetable.

MAN: I know. I am.

AGNES: I'm just looking for a job.

Jean Giraudoux (1882–1944)
French playwright and fiction writer

IV. Questions 29 to 38 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay.

from MY REMARKABLE UNCLE

The most remarkable man I have ever known in my life was my uncle Edward Philip Leacock—known to ever so many people in Winnipeg fifty or sixty years ago as E.P. His character was so exceptional that it needs nothing but plain narration. It was so exaggerated already that you couldn't exaggerate it.

5 When I was a boy of six, my father brought us, a family flock, to settle on an Ontario farm. We lived in an isolation unknown, in these days of radio, anywhere in the world. We were thirty-five miles from a railway. There were no newspapers. In the solitude of the dark winter nights the stillness was that of eternity.

10 Into this isolation there broke, two years later, my dynamic Uncle Edward, my father's younger brother. He had just come from a year's travel around the Mediterranean. He must have been about twenty-eight, but seemed a more than adult man, bronzed and self-confident, with a square beard like a Plantagenet¹ King. His talk was of Algiers, of the African slave market; of the Pyramids. To us it sounded like the *Arabian Nights*.² When we asked, "Uncle Edward, do you know the Prince of Wales?" he answered, "Quite intimately"—with no further explanation. It was an impressive trick he had.

In that year, 1878, there was a general election in Canada. E.P. was in it up to the neck in less than no time. He picked up the history and politics of Upper
20 Canada in a day, and in a week knew everybody in the countryside. He spoke at every meeting, but his strong point was the personal contact of electioneering, of bar-room treats. This gave full scope for his marvellous talent for flattery and make-believe.

"Why, let me see"—he would say to some tattered country specimen beside
25 him glass in hand—"surely, if your name is Framley, you must be a relation of my dear old friend General Sir Charles Framley of the Horse Artillery?" "Mebbe," the flattered specimen would answer. "I guess, mebbe; I ain't kept track very good of my folks in the old country." "Dear me! I must tell Sir Charles that I've seen you. He'll be so pleased." . . . In this way in a fortnight E.P. had conferred
30 honours and distinctions on half the township. They lived in a recaptured atmosphere of generals, admirals and earls. Vote? How else could they vote than

Continued

¹Plantagenet—the ruling family of England between the 12th and 14th centuries

²*Arabian Nights*—famous collection of stories told to an Arabian Sultan by his wife Scheherazade on 1001 successive nights

conservative, men of family like them?

The election, of course, was a walk-over. E.P. might have stayed to reap the fruits. But he knew better. Ontario at that day was too small a horizon. For these
35 were the days of the hard times of Ontario farming, when mortgages fell like snowflakes, and farmers were sold up, or sold out, or went “to the States”, or faded humbly underground.

But all the talk was of Manitoba now opening up. Nothing would do E.P. but that he and my father must go west. So we had a sale of our farm, with
40 refreshments, old-time fashion, for the buyers. The poor, lean cattle and the broken machines fetched less than the price of the whiskey. But E.P. laughed it all off, quoted that the star of the Empire glittered in the west, and off to the West they went, leaving us children behind at school.

They hit Winnipeg just on the rise of the boom, and E.P. came at once into
45 his own and rode on the crest of the wave. There is something of magic appeal in the rush and movement of a “boom” town. Life comes to a focus; it is all here and now, all *present*—just a clatter of hammers and saws, rounds of drinks and rolls of money. In such an atmosphere every man seems a remarkable fellow, a man of exception; individuality separates out and character blossoms like a rose.

E.P. came into his own. In less than no time he was everything and knew
50 everybody, conferring titles and honours up and down Portage Avenue. In six months he had a great fortune, on paper; took a trip east and brought back a charming wife from Toronto; built a large house beside the river; filled it with pictures that he said were his ancestors, and carried on in it a roaring hospitality
55 that never stopped.

His activities were wide. He was president of a bank (that never opened), head of a brewery (for brewing the Red River) and, above all, secretary-treasurer of the Winnipeg Hudson Bay and Arctic Ocean Railway that had a charter
60 authorizing it to build a road to the Arctic Ocean, when it got ready. They had no track, but they printed stationery and passes, and in return E.P. received passes over all North America.

But naturally his main hold was politics. He was elected right away into the Manitoba Legislature. They would have made him Prime Minister but for the existence of the grand old man of the Province, John Norquay. But even at that in
65 a very short time Norquay ate out of E.P.’s hand, and E.P. led him on a string. I remember how they came down to Toronto, when I was a schoolboy, with an adherent group of “Westerners”, all in heavy buffalo coats and bearded like Assyrians. E.P. paraded them on King Street like a returned explorer with savages.

70 Then came the crash of the Manitoba boom. Simple people, like my father,

Continued

were wiped out in a day. Not so E.P. The crash just gave him a lift as the smash of a big wave lifts a strong swimmer. He just went right on. I believe that in reality he was left utterly bankrupt. But it made no difference. He used credit instead of cash. He still had his imaginary bank, and his railway to the Arctic Ocean. Any one who called about a bill was told that E.P.'s movements were uncertain and would depend a good deal on what happened in Johannesburg. That held them another six months.

It was during this period that I used to see him when he made his periodic trips "east", to impress his creditors in the West. He floated, at first very easily, on hotel credit, borrowed loans and unpaid bills. A banker, especially a country town banker, was his natural mark and victim. He would tremble as E.P. came in, like a stock-dove that sees a hawk. E.P.'s method was so simple; it was like showing a farmer peas under thimbles. As he entered the banker's side-office he would say: "I say. Do you fish? Surely that's a greenhart casting-rod on the wall?" (E.P. knew the names of everything.) In a few minutes the banker, flushed and pleased, was exhibiting the rod, and showing flies in a box out of a drawer. When E.P. went out he carried a hundred dollars with him. There was no security. The transaction was all over.

The proceeding with a hotel was different. A country hotel was, of course, easy, in fact too easy. E.P. would sometimes pay such a bill in cash, just as a sportsman won't shoot a sitting partridge. But a large hotel was another thing. E.P., on leaving, would call for his bill at the desk. At the sight of it he would break out into enthusiasm at the reasonableness of it. "Just think!" he would say in his "aside" to me, "compare that with the Hotel Crillon in Paris!" The hotel proprietor had no way of doing this; he just felt that he ran a cheap hotel. Then another "aside", "Do remind me to mention to Sir John how admirably we've been treated; he's coming here next week." "Sir John" was our Prime Minister and the hotel keeper hadn't known he was coming—and he wasn't. . . . Then came the final touch—"Now, let me see . . . seventy-six dollars . . . seventy-six . . . You give me"—and E.P. fixed his eye firmly on the hotel man—"give me twenty-four dollars, and then I can remember to send an even hundred." The man's hand trembled. But he gave it.

This does not mean that E.P. was in any sense a crook, in any degree dishonest. His bills to him were just "deferred pay", like the British debts to the United States. He never did, never contemplated, a crooked deal in his life. All his grand schemes were as open as sunlight—and as empty.

Of course it could not last. Gradually credit crumbles. Faith weakens. Creditors grow hard, and friends turn their faces away. Gradually E.P. sank down. The death of his wife had left him a widower, a shuffling, half-shabby figure,

Continued

110 familiar on the street, that would have been pathetic but for his indomitable self-belief, the illumination of his mind. Even at that, times grew hard with him.

Presently even his power to travel came to an end. The railways found out at last that there wasn't any Arctic Ocean, and anyway the printer wouldn't print.

115 Just once again he managed to "come east." It was in June of 1891. I met him forging along King Street in Toronto—a trifle shabby but with a plug hat³ with a big band of crepe⁴ round it. "Poor Sir John," he said. "I felt I simply must come down for his funeral." Then I remembered that the Prime Minister was dead, and realized that kindly sentiment had meant free transportation.

120 That was the last I ever saw of E.P. A little after that someone paid his fare back to England. He received, from some family trust, a little income of perhaps two pounds a week. On that he lived, with such dignity as might be, in a lost village of Worcestershire. He told the people of the village—so I learned later—that his stay was uncertain; it would depend a good deal on what happened in China. But nothing happened in China; there he stayed, years and years. There he
125 might have finished out, but for a strange chance of fortune, a sort of poetic justice, that gave to E.P. an evening in the sunset.

It happened that in the part of England where our family belonged there was an ancient religious brotherhood, with a monastery and dilapidated estates that went back for centuries. E.P. descended on them, the brothers seeming to him an
130 easy mark, as brothers indeed are. In the course of his pious "retreat", E.P. took a look into the brothers' finances, and his quick intelligence discovered an old claim against the British Government, large in amount and valid beyond a doubt.

In less than no time E.P. was at Westminster, representing the brothers. He knew exactly how to handle British officials; they were easier even than Ontario
135 hotel keepers.

So E.P. got what he wanted. The British Government are so used to old claims that it would as soon pay as not. There are plenty left.

The brothers got a whole lot of money. In gratitude they invited E.P. to be their permanent manager; so there he was, lifted into ease and affluence. The
140 years went easily by, among gardens, orchards and fishponds old as the Crusades.

Stephen Leacock (1869–1944)
Canadian writer, teacher, and humorist

³plug hat—(colloquial) top hat

⁴band of crepe—black ribbon worn to indicate mourning

V. Questions 39 to 46 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay.

from ARE THE HOMELESS CRAZY?

It is commonly believed by many journalists and politicians that the homeless of America are, in large part, former patients of large mental hospitals who were deinstitutionalized in the 1970s—the consequence, it is sometimes said, of misguided liberal opinion that favored the treatment of such persons in community-based centers. It is argued that this policy, and the subsequent failure of society to build such centers or to provide them in sufficient number, is the primary cause of homelessness in the United States.

Those who work among the homeless do not find that explanation satisfactory. While conceding that a certain number of the homeless are or have been mentally unwell, they believe that, in the case of most unsheltered people, the primary reason is economic rather than clinical. The cause of homelessness, they say with disarming logic, is the lack of homes and of income with which to rent or acquire them.

They point to the loss of traditional jobs in industry (2 million every year since 1980) and to the fact that half of those who are laid off end up in work that pays a

poverty-level wage. They point out that since 1968 the number of children living in poverty has grown by 3 million, while welfare benefits to families with children have declined by 35 percent.

And they note, too, that these developments have occurred during a time in which the shortage of low-income family housing has intensified as the gentrification¹ of our major cities has accelerated. Half a million units of low-income housing are lost each year to condominium conversion as well as to arson, demolition, or abandonment. Between 1978 and 1980, median rents climbed 30 percent for people in the lowest income sector, driving many of these families into the streets. Since 1980, rents have risen at even faster rates.

In our rush to explain the homeless as a psychiatric problem even the words of medical practitioners who care for homeless people have been curiously ignored. A study published by the Massachusetts Medical Society, for instance, has noted that, with the exceptions of alcohol and drug use, the most frequent illnesses among a sample of the homeless population were trauma (31%), upper-respiratory

Continued

¹gentrification—the creation of upper-class neighbourhoods by entrepreneur real estate contractors

70 disorders (28%), limb disorders
(19%), mental illness (16%), skin
diseases (15%), hypertension (14%),
and neurological illness (12%).
Why, we may ask, of all these
calamities, does mental illness
command so much political and
press attention? The answer may be
that the label of mental illness
places the destitute outside the
sphere of ordinary life. It
80 personalizes an anguish that is
public in its genesis; it individ-
ualizes a misery that is both general
in cause and general in application.

There is another reason to assign
labels to the destitute and single out
mental illness from among their
many afflictions. All these other
problems—tuberculosis, asthma,
scabies, diarrhea, bleeding gums,
90 impacted teeth, etc.—bear no
stigma, and mental illness does. It
conveys a stigma in the United
States. It conveys a stigma in the
Soviet Union as well. In both
nations the label is used, whether as
a matter of deliberate policy or not,
to isolate and treat as special cases
those who, by deed or word or by
sheer presence, represent a threat to
100 national complacency. The two
situations are obviously not iden-
tical, but they are enough alike to
give Americans reason for concern.

The notion that the homeless are
largely psychotics who belong in
institutions, rather than victims of
displacement at the hands of
enterprising realtors, spares us from

110 the need to offer realistic solutions
to the deep and widening extremes
of wealth and poverty in the United
States. It also enables us to tell
ourselves that the despair of
homeless people bears no intimate
connection to the privileged
existence we enjoy—when, for
example, we rent or purchase one of
those restored town houses that once
provided shelter for people now
120 huddled in the street.

What is to be made, then, of the
supposition that the homeless are
primarily the former residents of
mental hospitals, persons who were
carelessly released during the
1970s? Many of them are, to be
sure. Among the older men and
women in the streets and shelters, as
many as one-third (some believe as
130 many as one-half) may be
chronically disturbed, and a number
of these people were deinstitution-
alized during the 1970s. But to
operate on that assumption in a city
such as New York—where nearly
half the homeless are small children
whose average age is six—makes no
sense. Their parents, with an
average age of twenty-seven, are not
140 likely to have been hospitalized in
the 1970s, either.

A frequently cited set of figures
tells us that in 1955 the average
daily census of non-federal
psychiatric institutions was 677,000,
and that by 1984 the number had
dropped to 151,000. But these

Continued

people didn't go directly from a hospital room to the street. The
150 bulk of those who had been psychiatric patients and were released from hospitals during the 1960s and early 1970s had been living in low-income housing, many in skid-row hotels or boardinghouses. Such housing—commonly known as SRO (single-room occupancy) units—was drastically diminished by the
160 gentrification of our cities that began in the early '70s. Almost 50 percent of SRO housing was replaced by luxury apartments or office buildings between 1970 and 1980, and the remaining units have been disappearing even more rapidly.

Even for those persons who are ill and were deinstitutionalized during the decades before 1980, the
170 precipitating cause of homelessness in 1987 is not illness but loss of housing. SRO housing offered low-cost sanctuaries for the homeless, providing a degree of safety and mutual support for those who lived within them. They were a demeaning version of the community health centers that society had promised; they were the
180 de facto "halfway houses" of the 1970s. For those people too—at most half of the homeless single persons in America—the cause of homelessness is lack of housing.

Even in those cases where mental instability is apparent, homelessness itself is often the precipitating

factor. For example, many pregnant women without homes are denied
190 prenatal care because they constantly travel from one shelter to another. Many are anemic. Many are denied essential dietary supplements by recent federal cuts. As a consequence, some of their children do not live to see their second year of life. Do these mothers sometimes show signs of stress? Do they appear disorganized, depressed,
200 disordered? Frequently. They are immobilized by pain, traumatized by fear. So it is no surprise that when researchers enter the scene to ask them how they "feel," the resulting report tells us that the homeless are emotionally unwell. The reports do not tell us that we have *made* these people ill. They do not tell us that illness is a natural
210 response to intolerable conditions. Nor do they tell us of the strength and the resilience that so many of these people retain despite the miseries they must endure.

A writer in the *New York Times* describes a homeless woman standing on a traffic island in Manhattan. "She was evicted from her small room in the hotel just
220 across the street," and she is determined to get revenge. Until she does, "nothing will move her from that spot. . . . Her argumentativeness and her angry fixation on revenge, along with the apparent absence of hallucinations, mark her as paranoid." Most physicians, I

Continued

230 imagine, would be more reserved in
passing judgment with so little
evidence, but this reporter makes his
diagnosis without hesitation. “The
paranoids of the street,” he says,
“are among the most difficult to
help.”

Perhaps so. But does it depend on
who is offering the help? Is anyone
offering to help this woman get
back her home? Is it crazy to seek
vengeance for being thrown into the
240 street? The absence of anger, some
psychiatrists believe, might indicate
much greater illness.

“No one will be turned away,”
says the mayor of New York City,
as hundreds of young mothers with
their infants are turned from the
doors of shelters season after

250 season. That may sound to some
like a denial of reality. “Now
you’re hearing all kinds of horror
stories,” says the President of the
United States² as he denies that
anyone is cold or hungry or
unhoused. On another occasion he
says that the unsheltered “are
homeless, you might say, by
choice.” That sounds every bit as
self-deceiving.

260 The woman standing on the traffic
island screaming for revenge until
her room has been restored to her
sounds relatively healthy by
comparison. If 3 million homeless
people did the same, and all at the
same time, we might finally be
forced to listen.

Jonathan Kozol
Contemporary American essayist

²President of the United States—Ronald Reagan was the U.S. President at the time this essay was
published in the Winter 1988 issue of the *Yale Review*

VI. Read the first draft of Robin's report. Read the report carefully, noting the revisions, and answer questions 47 to 53 in your Questions Booklet.

Paragraph 1 I had ^{two} ~~a couple of~~ reasons for choosing to do my report on the essay "Are the Homeless Crazy?" First of all, ^{the essay,} I was curious about the title, and after I read it I found that it related to what I want to go into—social work. I learned that the word "crazy" in the title refers to deinstitutionalized mental patients who had been taken out of mental homes and then abandoned because the community centres they were supposed to go into had never been built. Here in Canada, deinstitutionalized mental patients are also facing many problems because of government policies. The essay claims that these people are being used to provide a rationale for the large numbers of people ^{who} ~~which~~ are living on the streets because they are unable to find places to live that they ^{can} ~~could~~ afford.

Paragraph 2 ^{Is the problem of homelessness a serious one?} According to Jonathan Kozol, who wrote the essay, the problem of homeless people is a major problem in America, and it is getting worse all of the time. However, he strongly ^{emphasizes} ~~makes the point~~ that the homeless themselves are being made to take the blame, and he stresses that it is mainly journalists and politicians ^{blame them} ~~who really go all out in doing that~~. Then there are the people who profit from the situation—the real estate companies.

Paragraph 3 Kozol states that since 1980 two million traditional industrial jobs have been lost every year, and that although some of the unemployed do get new jobs, they are often paid at the poverty level. Although these are American statistics, the same thing happens in Canada. When the unemployed can't pay their rents and get forced out of the low-rental housing, the real estate people move in and

Continued

renovate the buildings. After improvements have been made, the buildings are rented or sold to young middle-class ^{people who are sometimes referred to as} "yuppies."

Paragraph

4

^{Therefore, according to Kozol, what we have is a very complex problem involving homeless}
The ones who were deinstitutionalized need the community centres they were ^{people who} promised. The unemployed need the help to get jobs that pay well enough to ^{require} pay for decent homes. Also, according to Kozol, "Even in those cases where ^{different} mental instability is apparent, homelessness itself is often the precipitating ^{kinds of} factor." This means that people who worry about not having jobs or homes are ^{assistance.} very ~~probably~~ likely to suffer mentally. This is a vicious circle: the problem is not just the mentally ill being homeless but also the jobless ~~unemployed~~ being affected mentally because they have been made homeless.

Paragraph

5

^{seems to suggest}
Is there a solution to all of this? Kozol ^{is kind of suggesting} that if politicians find scapegoats to blame (like the deinstitutionalized mental patients), they feel that they do not have to do anything because they believe that such people cannot be helped. The politicians have to be convinced that the real reason for the growing problem of homelessness is "economic rather than clinical." Kozol concludes with a reference to a New York woman who was put out of her hotel room. She stood on a traffic island just across the street and yelled out her anger and frustration. Kozol suggests that ~~maybe~~ all the unemployed homeless people should make their voices heard. ^{listen and act!} Maybe then the politicians would have to ~~get~~

~~their act together and do something.~~

VII. Questions 54 to 60 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

UNWRITTEN LETTER

- The wind has torn your embroidered apples
From their boughs
And flung them on the ground:
The rain has filled your water-barrels
5 Full to overflowing,
Made channels through your beds,
And spattered all the shining window-panes
You loved to keep so clean.
Sun, too, has done his damage:
10 The goldenglow is short and shrivelled up,
The purple asters fade, and look forlorn,
And dahlias drop their petals
One by one,
And when the evening comes
15 Look for your watering-pot.
There is no happiness in your garden now—
Even the trees feel it.
- All the neighbors are saying
They would like to see you again;
20 And I wish secretly
To meet you suddenly
Walking through your long, lonely avenue of elms.

Dorothy Livesay
Contemporary Canadian poet

VIII. Questions 61 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.

from TAY JOHN

Tay John was a legendary hero of the Shushwap Indians of British Columbia. The name, Tay John, is derived from tête jaune, a French term that means Yellowhead. In this excerpt, the narrator recounts an event that he witnessed the first time he saw Tay John.

- It wasn't wide, that river I was following. Twice as wide as a man might jump, perhaps, but it was swift, and I could hear the boulders rolling in the surge of its waters. Then across from me, as though he had grown there while my eyes blinked, I saw a man. He was stripped to the waist, wearing only moccasins and a pair of moose-hide leggings. Behind him some little distance I saw his rifle stacked against a tree and beside it, his pack with a shirt of caribou hide, the hair still upon it, tossed upon the ground. He had come down the creek opposite me. What he was doing there when I saw him, standing out on that flat among the grasses, I don't know. About to make his camp for the night perhaps.
- 10 I couldn't speak to him. There was too much noise with that confounded water. I shouted. "Hallo!" I shouted; "Hallo!" I waved my arms and shouted again. It seemed absurd. I was so close to him that he should have been able to hear a whisper. He stood there across from me, too, with his head tilted a bit as though he were listening. Yet even then it seemed he wasn't listening to me at all,
- 15 but to something else I couldn't hear. Had he been able to hear me, for all I knew then, he wouldn't have understood what I said. But, still, he wasn't all Indian. There was that yellow hair. It was long and heavy. A girl would have been proud of it, and he had it held with some sort of a band around his forehead. A black band, like a strip of hide cut from some small fur-bearing animal. A piece of marten, say.
- 20 Yes, his hair shone. It seemed to shed a light about him. Then he looked directly at me. I have no doubt he would have spoken to me had we met in the usual way. But here was this rushing torrent between us. We couldn't cross it. Our voices couldn't be heard above it. When he looked at me I could see the
- 25 reflected light of the sun burning deep down in his dark eyes. Then he turned slowly, and took a step back towards his rifle.
- And in that moment, while his foot was lifted for his second step, and his back towards me, it happened. Suddenly it seemed to me like a play being put on for my benefit, with the forest and mountains for backdrop, the gravel bar where
- 30 this Yellowhead was for stage, and the deep river with its unceasing crescendo for the orchestra pit.

Continued

A bear was there above him, between him and his rifle. It may have been there for some time. Anyway it was there now, no question about it. A grizzly bear at that, a silver tip, with a great roll of muscle over its shoulders and the hair slowly rising in fear along the length of its backbone. For the bear was frightened, make no mistake about that. Later when it stood up I saw it was a she-bear. She probably had a cub cached somewhere close by. As a rule, of course, a bear won't attack a man—but this was a she-grizzly, and she was trapped. There was the pack behind her, you see, with its human smell. There was the man before her. Her cub was somewhere near by. If she hadn't been frightened or angered—and the cause and often the result of the one is much the same as the other—she would have turned around and left a situation she was unprepared to meet. But, no, she stood her ground.

And my Yellowhead across from me stood his. He slowly, ever so slowly, put his foot back upon the ground and waited. He stood, a bronze and golden statue planted among the grasses that rose up to his knees. This was the sort of thing I had sometimes dreamed of—of meeting a bear one day close up, hand to hand so to speak, and doing it in. An epic battle: man against the wilderness. And now I saw the battle taking form, but another man was in my place and with the river between us I could give no help. None at all. My revolver? I might have hit the man, but against the bear it was worth no more than shooting peas. I waited.

Something was going to happen. The grizzly opened her mouth. I saw her sharp white teeth. She flicked the grass with her long-nailed fore-paw. That paw seemed suddenly to sprout out from her body, then to be drawn back. She advanced a step. I saw the right hand of this Yellowhead fellow move gently to his waist and come out with the handle of a gleaming knife in its fist. The muscles along his shoulders rippled. His rifle was beyond his reach, past the bear. He glanced not once at the river nor at me behind him. His eyes I knew were on the bear. She swung her head low, from side to side, as though she cautioned him to be careful. Her mouth opened and she roared. I could hear that across the river. It came to me faintly, like a cough.

Then Yellowhead moved quickly. His left hand swiped the band off his head and threw it towards the grizzly, not directly at her, but just above her head. She reared up, and then I saw the hang of her laden teats. She stood so that she towered above Yellowhead. That's what I called him now. I found myself saying "Yellowhead," "Yellowhead." I had to give him a name so that I could help him—morally, you know. I had to align him with the human race. Without a name no man is an individual, no individual wholly a man.

There she was above him, immense and unassailable as a mountain side. She

Continued

clawed the air after this black thing that flew towards her. And when she swung he sprang beneath her arm. I saw his left hand grab the long fur around her neck, and I saw his right swing twice with the long-bladed knife, and the knife stayed there the second time, a flash of light embedded in her side, searching for the
75 great, slow beat of her heart. It was a matter of moments. Then they were on the ground rolling over and over. I caught glimpses now and then of that yellow mass of hair, like a bundle the she-grizzly held with affection to her breast. It was his only chance. If he had stepped back from her those claws would have ripped his belly open, torn his head from off his shoulders. He did the one thing, the only
80 thing he could have done, and did it well.

They rolled to the very edge of the stream on whose other bank I stood. They were quiet there. Yellowhead was beneath. "If he's not dead," I said, "he's drowned." The great mass of fur was quiescent¹ before me, and from its side a stream of dark blood flowed into the hungry river.

85 Then the mass quivered. It heaved. A man's head appeared beside it, bloody, muddied, as though he were just being born, as though he were climbing out of the ground. Certainly man had been created anew before my eyes. Like birth itself it was a struggle against the powers of darkness, and Man had won. Like birth, too, it was a cry and a protest—his lips parted as though a cry, unheard by
90 me, came from them. Death, now that is silence—an acceptance—but across this creek from me was life again. Man had won against the wilderness, the unknown, the strength that is not so much beyond our strength as it is capable of a fury and single passion beyond our understanding. He had won. *We* had won. That was how I felt. I shouted. I did a dance. Then I calmed down. I wanted more than
95 anything I knew to go across and touch this man, this Yellowhead, to tell him, "Well done!" But I couldn't cross that river. I might have gone back to the foot log, but that would have taken more than an hour, and it would seem that I was leaving him in his moment of victory—when no man wishes to be alone. A victory is no victory until it has been shared. Defeat? Well, that is another matter.

100 But Yellowhead was damaged. Somehow the grizzly had clawed his face. One side of it streamed blood. It looked raw like meat. For a time he sat there on the ground, among the grasses, and the blood ran off his shoulder, down his arm, down between his very fingers. He didn't look at me. Seemed to have forgotten all about me. He stared with wonder, I think, at the body of the bear lying half in
105 the river. He spat some of her fur out, caught between his teeth. Then he washed his face, found the band for his hair and bound it back. After that he took his knife, still caught between the she-grizzly's ribs, cut her head off, neatly severing the vertebrae at its base, climbed with it up a tree and left it there, caught in a crotch so that it gazed upon the scene of its dismay.

¹quiescent—motionless, quiet

Continued

110 He came down to the side of the river, bathed his face again. It still bled. I
shouted, but he didn't hear me, or didn't care to. He disdained me, that fellow,
absolutely.

115 It was growing dusk now. He went back to the edge of the forest where his
pack and rifle rested. He staggered once and leaned against a tree. Then he pulled
on his caribou-hide shirt, hoisted his pack and shouldered it. He picked up his
rifle and stepped, without one backward glance, behind the trees. He vanished, as
though he were leaving one form of existence for another. For a moment or two I
saw his yellow head, a gleam of light being carried away through the timber.
120 Entering the forest his pack brushed against a branch of spruce. The branch
moved there before my eyes, swayed gently, touched by an invisible hand after he
had gone. It moved. The river flowed. The headless trunk of the she-grizzly
swung out a bit from the bank, rolled over in the force of the current, as if in her
deep sleep she dreamed. Night's shadow was on the valley. Trees creaked in a
new wind blowing. An owl hooted somewhere close to me.

125 It was late when I got back to camp. It was dark, black as the inside of a bear.
Night was about me like a covering from which I tried to escape. My hands
wandered far from me feeling my way. My fingers touched branches, the harsh
bark of trees. I pulled them back to me, held them against my sides. They were
some company for me in the darkness.

130 Days passed before I told them in the camp of what I had seen on the bank of
the river that streamed clear and fresh and nameless before our tents. It took me a
time to find the words.

Howard O'Hagan

Canadian writer.

Howard O'Hagan was born in Lethbridge
and grew up in the Yellowhead Lake
region of the Rocky Mountains near Jasper.

Credits

Elizabeth Enright. "The Eclipse" from *Doublefields Memories and Stories*. Copyright © 1957 by Elizabeth Enright, © renewed in 1985 by Elizabeth Enright. Reprinted by permission of Russell & Volkening Inc.

Tom Absher. "Hunting With My Father" from *Plowshares*. Reprinted under the Alberta Government Print Licence with CanCopy (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency.)

Jean Giraudoux. "The Apollo of Bellac" from *24 Favorite One-Act Plays*. Copyright © 1954, 1982 by Maurice Valency. Amateur live stage performance rights are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Samuel French, Inc.

Stephen Leacock. From *My Remarkable Uncle* (McClelland & Stewart), Public Domain.

Jonathan Kozol. "Distancing the Homeless" from *The Yale Review*, 77(2), pp.153–167. Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishers.

Dorothy Livesay. "Unwritten Letter" from *The Phases of Love* (Coach House Press), copyright © 1983. Reprinted by permission of Coach House Press.

Howard O'Hagan. From *Tay John* by Howard O'Hagan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited.) Reprinted by permission of the Canadian Publishers, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto.

English 33: Part B
June 1996

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 0571 5402

